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FITMENTS, I.—THE HALL.



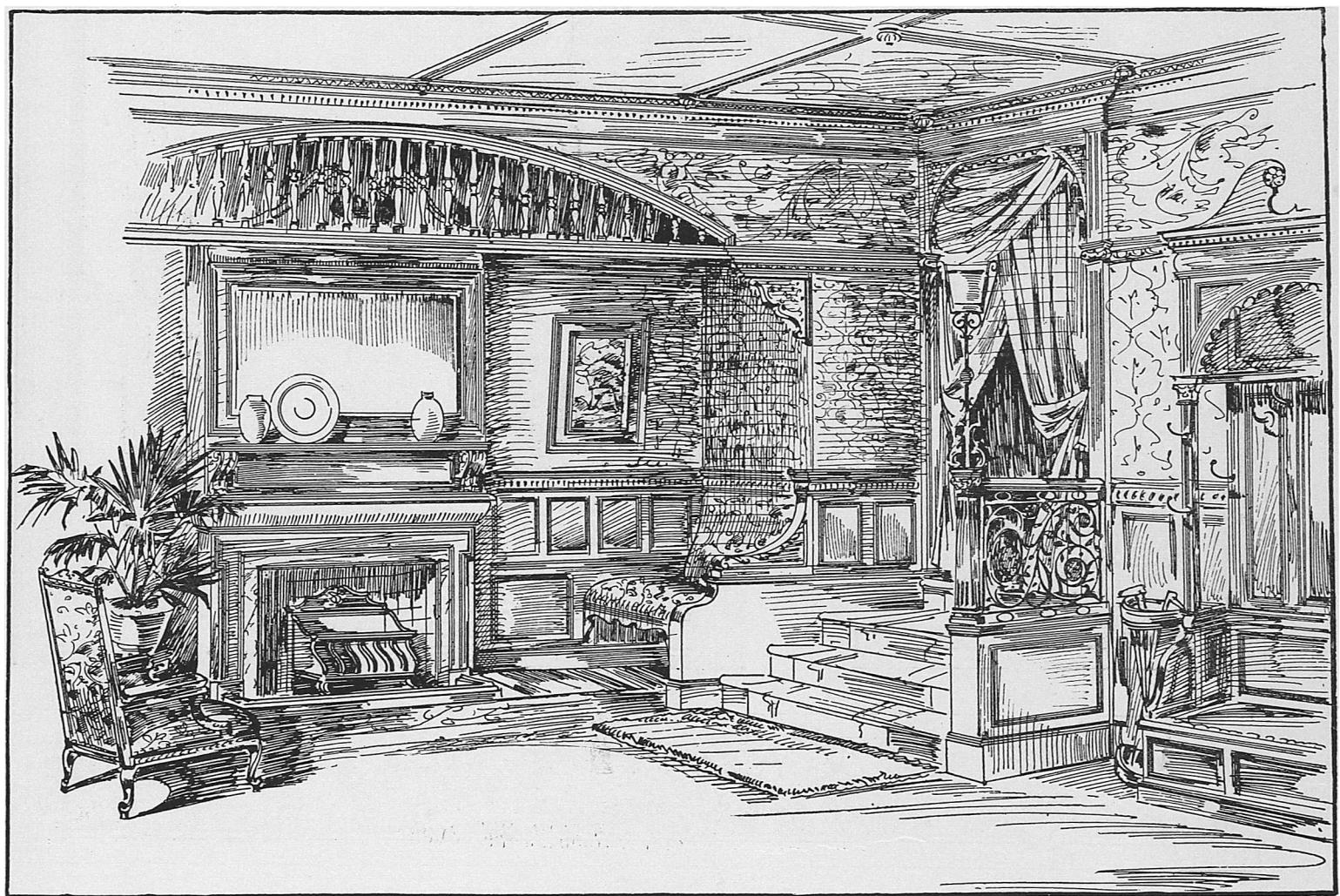
WHO invented the word fitment is a question that it seems impossible to answer. But it is quite within recent years since the word, and also the practical application of it, came into general use, and judging by the popularity which it has attained to at the present time, it seems likely to remain among us as a useful, artistic, sanitary and economical method of decoration for our homes.

There are numerous advantages to be derived from having furniture specially designed for and made part of any particular room, for fitments must necessarily be specially made to suit each different room, and designed to satisfy the tastes and requirements of the individual owner of it, and

other branches of art—it was the period of Reynolds, Gainsborough, Flaxman and Wedgwood. After that period the decorative arts fell back into a debased Rococo, very much meaner in its style and its methods than that of the French.

Chippendale's work is very much inferior to Heppelwhite's and Sheraton's in grace, simplicity and charm. Chippendale's work is somewhat clumsy and over-elaborated, and might be compared to a mirror which reflected the chaotic fads of the time in which he lived, the Rococo and the so-called Gothic. But in the simpler specimens there is, undoubtedly, a certain picturesqueness and individuality. A much more cultivated and refined decoration is that associated with the brothers Adam. Their work is distinguished by the utmost grace and skill in application of the finest classic designs to modern purposes, a style that is dainty, gracious and elegant.

It is astonishing how many people think that to have a thing cheap it cannot be beautiful, or if beautiful it cannot be cheap. Now our intention in this series of chapters on fitments



DESIGN FOR FITMENTS IN HALL.

thus the designer and house furnisher have an opportunity of carrying out a complete scheme of decoration throughout the whole apartment.

There is no doubt that we are somewhat returning to the best periods of industrial art, when we introduce fitments into our bedrooms, dining-rooms, drawing-rooms, etc., for we are merely introducing into our homes in modern guise the ingle nooks, china cupboards, and window-seats of the Jacobean and Queen Anne periods.

As regards styles in which fitments could or should be made there is absolutely no rule; almost all the styles could be utilized. A few, for instance, such as Sheraton, Adams, Chippendale, Queen Anne and Italian Renaissance. The Elizabethan and Jacobean styles could, of course, be adapted, but are much too heavy for the above purpose.

Undoubtedly the most graceful period of decoration in this country was that dating from 1770 to 1800, the period of Chippendale, the Adams, O. Heppelwhite and of Sheraton as in

is to try and abolish all such notions, and to show how beauty can be united with utility and economy.

We have taken the Hall for our first chapter, as being the first and proper commencement to any series of chapters on house decoration. First impressions, as we all know, go a long way. The hall, therefore, bears the brunt of such, and the visitor upon entering gets at once the keynote to the scale of artistic decoration, which resounds in complete harmony throughout the entire house.

There is, however, one great objection that impedes the progress of this method of furnishing; and that is the present unsatisfactory system of leasehold tenure. No tenant is expected to go to any considerable expense in having the rooms made habitable as well as beautiful; in having general constructive furniture and decoration, which, at the end of the lease, the landlord would step in and claim as a fixture.

Some people would say why not have the fitments made portable, so that they could be made to unscrew and be taken

to pieces? Even supposing the fitments were thus rendered removable, it is not likely they would fit the house they were being taken to without a great deal of alteration.

Fitments should by all means be eminently useful beyond everything, especially in the dining-room, library and bedroom; as we have already said, this mode of furnishing has been peculiar to the very best periods of domestic art.

The old palaces of the Renaissance in Italy, France and Germany, renowned for their excellence in their interior wood-work and the carved chimney-pieces, the wall-panelling and general decoration. The same feeling for fitments will also be found in the domestic art of the Moors and Persians, both famous for their recessed and furnished niches and divans. And if we look nearer home for specimens of simple and still beautiful fitments in the shape of sideboards, cupboards and recessed wardrobes which, in their simplicity of beauty are often overlooked or despised, we must recognize the fact that the beautiful has a commercial or money value as well as an artistic one. Art can lend to an object a value greater than that of the material of which it consists. This being the case, it follows that no matter of what woods the fitments are made, so long as there appears an artistic feeling in the design.

One method of decoration for the hall would be to paint the woodwork white, the wood to be pine; the hall paper of an orange red, the mouldings of the furniture fitments to be picked out with yellow, and the carpet and hangings of an olive-green, or any choice shade of green.

#### AN IDEAL PARLOR.

BY CARRIE MAY ASHTON.



HERE are parlors and parlors, some cosy and homelike, and others stiff and cold, that throw a chill over everyone that enters their portals. Let me paint for you a picture of an ideal one. The front of the one described is octagon shape, and has one large east window, one north-east one and a south-east one, making it a large, airy room. Sliding doors open on one side into the hall, and on the other into the back parlor.

In one corner is a handsome, carved wood mantel, with dainty and choice bric-a-brac, and a rose-bowl filled with exquisite jacquimot roses. This room is finished in hard pine.

The paper on the walls is a soft shade of gray, and an in-grain; the frieze has a creamy background, with wild roses and forget-me-nots scattered gracefully over it, and the ceiling is gilt and white, with conventional blue corner pieces.

The soft, rich Wilton carpet of almost indescribable tints, has a very light ground and a great deal of old-rose and blue in it.

Heavy chenille draperies, a combination of old-rose and blue, hang between the two parlors, and the hall and front parlor, which are draped back.

At the windows are shades of gray and then double sash curtains of robin's egg blue China silk, trimmed with pretty fringe to match. Over these hang beautiful lace curtains. The effect from the outside is full as pretty as that inside.

Over the mantel hangs a beautiful water-color painting of pink and white clover blossoms, framed in gilt and white enamel. A pair of water-color sketches framed in oak, two etchings in silver and white frames, and "Christ in the Temple," complete the pictures on the walls.

In one corner of the room stands a brass easel holding an exquisite Latin etching, "The End of Day," framed in the natural wood—curly maple. Over this is thrown the daintiest scarf or drape of white silk mull. On one end is painted a number of pansies, from golden yellow to royal purple, and on the other is a graceful spray of Rosea Wigelia. The ends are both hemstitched and are finished with the most delicate little silk tassels to match the colors in the pansies and Wigelia. This is tied in the centre with a bow of ribbon. Another scarf that is thrown over one corner of the mantel is of blue China silk, and has spider webs embroidered on either end with gilt

tinsel. One end is hemstitched and the other fringed and tied. A sixteenth century table of oak, and highly polished, is very attractive and useful and stands near the large window. A scarf is thrown carelessly over one corner. On this is placed a box of photographs, a slender vase holding three or four roses or carnations, and an odd and curious frame holding a picture of sweet baby faces.

Next comes the furniture, and here we find quaint, odd pieces, instead of a regular set, as in days gone by. There is a tete-a-tete and one large easy chair, upholstered in blue plush of a soft, rich shade, a handsome oak rocker with a cushion and back of blue plush, the back having biscuit work, the seat heavily studded with brass-headed tacks, which gives it quite an antique look. A chair-roll in the shape of saddle-bags of blue silk and tied with ribbons hangs on one side of this chair. A very handsomely carved chair is of oak, very highly polished, and in a quaint, odd style. A rattan chair with ribbons run in and a cushion of fancy plush or velvet, complete the furniture.

Large ottomans have taken the place of the foot cushions so much in vogue for several seasons. They are upholstered with any pretty color, either to match or harmonize with the other furnishings.

The brass chandelier in the centre of the room, with its four jets surmounted with cut-glass globes, sheds a soft light over everything.

A few odd pieces of fancy work, as useful as they are beautiful, are found here and there. There is no crowded appearance, as in so many parlors. There is grace and beauty and comfort here, and it is truly a picture for an artist.

DARK orange topazes are cut into busts used for seal handles, or into tiny statuettes decorating niches of architectural brooches in the Cellini style. These brooches are most artistically worked. They consist of vari-colored enamelled gold adorned with gems, or of onyx or cornelian incrusted with pearls, diamonds, rubies, sapphires and emeralds symmetrically arranged, and placed with due regard to harmony of color.

THE ceilings of the great majority of our rooms are flat, owing to the exigencies of space, no less than to those of cost. When a perfectly flat plane of plaster is presented there are alternatives of treating it with colors alone, or previously dividing it by mouldings or relief ornament. The latter treatment is the one which obviously recommends itself where there is not too close a limit of cost, and especially if the area of the ceiling is large. It is difficult to treat satisfactorily with color alone a large area of plain flat ceiling, and such treatment should really be limited to ceilings of small dimensions.

THREE are nowadays cleanly springs and hair mattresses piled high in place of the old feather beds; and as to stiff white bedcovers, pillow slips and shams, false sheets and valenciennes trimmings, monogrammed and ruffled fineries, there is a truce. They were so slippery, so troublesome, and so false withal, that the beds that have known them shall know them no more forever. They had always to be unpinned and unhooked before the sleeper could enter his bed, and they were the torment of the housemaid. They entailed a degree of washing and ironing that was endless, and yet many a young house-keeper thought them indispensable. That idea has gone out completely. The bed now is made up with its fresh linen sheets, its clean blankets and its Marseilles quilt, with square or long pillows, as the sleeper fancies, with bolster in plain line sheath. Then, over the whole is thrown a light lace cover lined with liberty silk. This may be as expensive or as cheap as the owner wishes. Spreads of satin may be used, covered with Chinese embroidery, or with patchwork designs. One light and easily aired drapery succeeds the four or five pieces of unmanageable linen. If the bed is a tester, and the curtains of silk or chintz, the bed covering should match in tint, and in a very pretty bedroom the walls should be covered with chintz or silk.

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